



4

Paradise School could become arts center

Paradise School, which closed its doors in May 2013 due to an inadequate number of students, has potential for a second life. A group of interested individuals from Paradise and Plains recently formed the Paradise School Preservation Committee and hope to transform the century-old historic building into a center for visitors, the arts and community life.

Tourists, approaching northwest Montana from the east and south along Hwy. 200, pass through the community of Paradise en-route to Glacier National Park, Flathead Lake and the National Bison Range. As envisioned, a Sanders County Visitor Center would provide local resource information, promote area attractions and businesses and commemorate the history of Paradise with a railroad museum and a veterans' memorial. It would also serve as a permanent arts facility and a hub for arts activities.

The Paradise School Board has agreed to give the school and surrounding land to Sanders County, which would lease it to the Paradise School Preservation Committee.

The county was recently awarded a Community Development Block Grant from the Montana Department of Commerce to study the feasibility of the project. For details, call 406-827-6935.

MORE CONGRATS TO ...

Two University of Montana students who received Bigfork Summer Playhouse scholarships: **Marc McDuff** (musician) who received a \$1,000 scholarship; and **Jacob Sefcak** (actor), who received the \$2,500 Kacie Brekhush Shining Star Memorial Scholarship. Sefcak is a graduate of Bigfork High School and was a favorite performer with the Bigfork Playhouse Children's Theatre.

The **Museum of the Rockies** at Montana State University in Bozeman, which received a \$72,817 Museums of America grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services to help fund a new fieldtrip program for K-12th grade students. The program, which costs \$144,000 over a three-year period, aims to keep museum education and informal learning experiences at the forefront of standards-based education for Montana's schools. The project will increase the museum's capacity to reach more students each year, create guides for teachers and students, and increase the number of Montana State University student-led fieldtrip programs.

The **Montana Office of Tourism (MTOT)**, which won a *Travel Weekly* Silver Magellan Award for an ad campaign it ran last winter credited with bringing \$6.9 million to the state from a \$25,000 investment. MTOT won the award for the Travel Destinations category. *Travel Weekly* is the industry's leading news source, and it receives Magellan Award entries from top organizations and professionals around the world. "The Montana Office of Tourism is using innovative and resourceful strategies to drive visitation and strengthen the state's economy," Montana Department of Commerce Director Meg O'Leary said. "This award is a great achievement and another reminder of Montana's position as a travel-industry leader with a high standard of excellence." The campaign was prepared in conjunction with several of MTOT's marketing partners, including PlaceIQ, Spark SMG and Bozeman-based MercuryCSC.

The city of **Bozeman**, which has earned a spot on *Mother Earth News'* 2014 "Great Places You've (Maybe) Never Heard Of" list. The magazine's October-November issue ranks Bozeman highly for its numerous cultural and recreational options, natural beauty and thriving economy. Among the cultural amenities, it lists weekly concerts on Main Street and other cultural performances, and the Museum of the Rockies and American Computer and Robotics Museum. "Bozeman's ski scene might lure you here, but the good job market, wealth of creative and outdoor outlets, and blazing sunsets may have you thinking about staying," writes K.C. Compton, the magazine's senior editor. Nominations come from *Mother Earth News* readers, social media communities and staff. The other cities selected for this year's list are Ashland, OR; Beaufort, SC; Burlington, VT; Evanston, IL; Lincoln, NB; Penns Valley, PA; and Sparta, TN.

TRANSITIONS

Eric Whitney, a radio reporter covering health issues for NPR and Kaiser Health News, joined Montana Public Radio (MTPR) as news director on Sept. 1. He replaces Sally Mauk who retired in May. MTPR General Manager William Marcus says the station's search committee was pleased with the number of highly qualified applicants for the position and that Whitney stood out. "Eric has spent most of his 20-year public radio career reporting from and about the West," Marcus said. "He's a proven professional and I'm confident he will carry on MTPR's strong tradition of excellence in public radio journalism." Before his freelance work for NPR and Kaiser Health News, Whitney reported for Colorado Public Radio and started the news department at public station KRCC in Colorado Springs. He also served as assistant news director for High Plains News in Billings. Whitney says he looks forward to his move back to Montana. "I'm really excited about becoming part of Montana Public Radio and look forward to joining the dialog around the issues that matter to our listeners," he said. MTPR serves western and north central Montana from studios at The University of Montana in Missoula.



Eric Whitney

Kim Simmonds took the helm as executive director at the MonDak Heritage Center in Sidney on Oct. 8. Simmonds is a public historian, with an undergraduate degree in history and art history from Augsburg College in Minneapolis, who is pursuing a master's in nonprofit administration from Metropolitan State University in St. Paul. She comes to Sidney from Rapid City, SD. She has worked as a collections manager for the Richfield Historical Society and the Edina Historical Society, both in Minnesota, where she cataloged and stored historical objects. She also served as a tour guide of the historic Bartholomew House and the Longfellow House, also in Minnesota. Additionally, Simmonds has conducted historical research, both independently and for environmental impact studies, and has created history-related programming to share with the public.

Scott Kall was recently hired by the Helena Symphony as the director of Patron Services. His primary responsibilities include the oversight and management of ticket sales for all concerts and events, the coordination of volunteers, serving as the lead staff person for daily relationships with the public, and general office management. In

addition, Kall will retain his position as operations manager, as well as project manager for the annual Symphony Under the Stars. Kall has been associated with the Helena Symphony for almost 25 years, serving in a number of staff positions, as well as playing bass trombone with the orchestra.

Wesley Harvey joined the staff at the Red Lodge Clay Center as the new curator of exhibitions. He was born and raised in Van Buren, IN, known as the "popcorn capital of the world," and received his BFA in Ceramics from Indiana University in Bloomington and his MFA in Ceramics from



Wesley Harvey

Texas Tech University in Lubbock. Since 2008, Wesley has been teaching as an adjunct professor at various institutions in San Antonio, and also working as a full-time artist. While in San Antonio, he was the co-founder and co-director of an artist-run studio/gallery, Clamp Light Artist Studios and Gallery. He has exhibited his artwork nationally and internationally, and recently won first place in the 20th San Angelo National Ceramic Competition. His work can be found in various publications, including

Two new employees join the staff at WaterWorks Art Museum in Miles City. **Calli Nessen** is the new education director and **Ciara Bruce** is administrative assistant. Nessen comes from Laramie, WY, where she worked at the American Heritage Center as an exhibit curator. A graduate of the University of Wyoming, she'll be responsible for the WAM's Outreach program to rural Eastern Montana schools and the educational programs for adults and youth at the museum. Her own art focuses in ceramics and printmaking, and has been featured in numerous exhibits throughout



Calli Nessen

Wyoming. Bruce is a Miles City native who graduated from Miles Community College with an associate's degree in business. She assists the executive director in all aspects of operations, management and development of the museum, and manages the museum store and volunteer staff.



Ciara Bruce

Actors Theatre of Montana recently changed its name to **Bozeman Actors Theatre** and is now a nonprofit corporation with a goal of creating a permanent theatrical home in Bozeman. The company is celebrating six seasons of presenting professional theatre on various local stages. Bolstered by the success of last year's "August: Osage County," the troupe staged Julia Cho's "The Language Archive," directed by BAT member Will Dickerson, Oct. 16-25 at Montana State University's Black Box Theater in Bozeman.

CONDOLENCES TO ...

The family and friends of journalist **Ronald Selden**. He died Aug. 29 near Fort Peck Reservoir. The Glasgow resident was 58. He was born on May 13, 1956, in Corvallis, OR. He was a talented writer and storyteller, which served him well as a reporter for the *Missoulian*, *Great Falls Tribune* and, later, as a freelance journalist for many publications, including *Indian Country Today* and the *Missoula Independent*. More recently, he went to work for the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks in various positions until he ultimately took the position of public information officer for Region 6 of the department in Glasgow. He had a strong sense of justice and strived to reveal the truth in every situation he covered. He was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize in 1993.

The family and friends of musician and square-dance caller **Virgil Wayne Thompson**. He died Aug. 26 at his home north of Ronan. He was born in 1931 in Big Timber and worked as a telegrapher and a lineman, retiring from Ronan Telephone Company in 1994. He was a square dance teacher and caller for more than 50 years, and also sang, played the guitar and wrote songs. He was also an accomplished wood carver, whose expertise in folk arts was showcased in the Montana exhibit at the Spokane World's Fair, as well as at a national gathering of folk artists in Glacier National Park.

Continued on next page